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Identical letters dated 31 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and in reference to the monthly Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East held on 25 May 2016, I should like to draw attention to the following:

- The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic strenuously objects to and deplores the failure at the above-mentioned briefing by Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, to address conditions in the occupied Syrian Golan. He also failed to highlight the position of the United Nations on the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan as set forth in the relevant United Nations resolutions, notably Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Furthermore, he did not address ongoing Israeli violations and illegal activities in the occupied Syrian Golan, even though those issues are at the heart of the item under discussion and an integral part of his mandate as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

- It is common knowledge that the item the situation in the Middle East has historically been reserved for considering ways of enforcing United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions calling for an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and a withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967, as well as resolutions on ending Israeli violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region in accordance with the recognized terms of reference.

- Mr. Mladenov overstepped his mandate when he stated at the aforementioned briefing that the Council would be briefed separately on Syria later that same week. Matters relating to the crisis in Syria scheduled to be discussed by the Security Council at a later date fall under other mandates. Therefore, for Mr. Mladenov to make such a remark is, in principle, a violation of his mandate and evinces flagrant disregard for the terms of reference established for this item by the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

- In dozens of official letters and bilateral meetings with Secretariat officials, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has warned the Secretariat of the

danger of ignoring the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. We are surprised, then, that at the aforementioned briefing, the Secretariat has again chosen to ignore Israel's refusal to implement internationally recognized resolutions and withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967. We are also surprised that the Secretariat ignored such ongoing Israeli violations and acts of aggression as the building of settlements, the confiscation of land and the theft of natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan, and repressive Israeli policies such as arbitrary arrest and sham trials against our people there. Additionally, on 17 April 2016, the Prime Minister of the Israeli occupation Government held a cabinet meeting in the occupied Syrian Golan that was accompanied by provocative assertions by Israeli officials about the Golan being an integral part of Israel. That was a blatant violation of internationally recognized resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Also, we would have expected the members of the Security Council to be briefed on the assistance and support provided to terrorist groups in the area of separation in the Golan by the Israeli occupation forces, who have transported injured terrorists from the line of separation to Israeli hospitals for treatment and then returned them to Syria across that same line to resume their terrorist activities. Such practices are not only a flagrant violation of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces (1974), the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and international law, but also endanger the lives and undermine the work of UNDOF personnel. Indeed, the terrorist groups have abducted UNDOF peacekeepers on several occasions.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Secretariat to include the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan in future monthly briefings on the situation in the Middle East, and calls for implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative